

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-03 AF-06 ARA-10 EA-10 NEA-10

/081 W

----- 104873

R 191759Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6755

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS OTTAWA 2292

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, CA

SUBJECT: CANADIAN VOTE ON PLO OBSERVER STATUS AT ILO

1. DURING HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE JUNE 17 JOHN DIEFENBAKER OF PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION ASKED HOW GOC VOTED ON GRANTING OBSERVER STATUS TO PLO AT ILO CONFERENCE.

EXTAFF MIN MACEACHEN REPLIED:

QUOTE. ... THE QUESTION OF THE VOTES THAT WERE POLLED AT THE ILO WITH RESPECT TO THE PLO WERE THE SUBJECT OF INSTRUCTIONS WHICH I ISSUED TO THE DELEGATION EARLY LAST WEEK OR MAYBE A FEW DAYS BEFORE THAT. THERE WERE TWO MAJOR RESOLUTIONS, ONE A COMBINED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ADMISSION OF AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THE PLO TO ATTEND AS OBSERVERS AT THE ILO. ON THAT RESOLUTION CANADA ABSTAINED. A SECOND RESOLUTION WAS PROPOSED BY THE WORKERS' GROUPS--CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES, I BELIEVE--WHICH STIPULATED THAT NO OBSERVER GROUP COULD ATTEND THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE ILO UNLESS IT RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF ALL MEMBER STATES. CANADA VOTED IN SUPPORT OF THAT RESOLUTION, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY WAS NOT CARRIED BY THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF. IT WAS A RESOLUTION WHICH WAS INTENDED TO ASSERT CANADA'S INTEREST IN THE CONTINUED INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL

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AS A STATE, AND AN INDICATION THAT WE EXPECTED ALL WHO

WOULD JOIN THE DELIBERATIONS AT THE ILO WOULD ACCEPT
THAT FACT, INCLUDING THE PLO ITSELF. END QYOTE.

2. IN MORE BROADLY FRAMED FOLLOW-UP QUESTION CONCERNING
GOC MIDDLE EAST POLICY DIEFENBAKER WASKED WHETHER
"THIS ABSTENTION HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DESIRE
ON THE PART OF THE CANADAIN GOVERNMENT TO DO NOTHING
WHICH MIGHT ANNOY THE PLO OR THE ARAB NATIONS."

3. SIGNIFICANT EXCERPTS OF MACEACHEN'S RESPONSE FOLLOW:
QUOTE: WE HAVE ALWAYS STATED THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT
FEELS THAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE REPRESENTED,
FOR EXAMPLE, AT DELIBERATIONS WHICH HAVE A BEARING ON
THE FUTURE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. I BELIEVE
THAT POSITION WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY MOST HON. MEMBERS,
IF NOT ALL HON. MEMBERS, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. BUT
WE REFUSE TO TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE PLO ITSELF
SHOULD BE THE ONLY AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THAT IS WHY, ON THESE
PARTICULAR RESOLUTIONS WHICH INVOLVE TWO ASPECTS,
NAMELY, THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND
THE PLO AS AN ORGANIZATION, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY
ABSTAINED. WE HAVE BEEN IN EXTREMELY GOOD COMPANY
IN THAT ABSTENTION. END QUOTE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VOTING, LIBERATION FRONTS, MEETING OBSERVERS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975OTTAWA02292
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750214-0711
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750634/aaaabfet.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 FEB 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <09 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CANADAIN VOTE ON PLO OBSERVER STATUS AT ILO
TAGS: ELAB, CA, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006